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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for two group activities are presented, one for high school and one for junior high school. The purpose of the activities, both of which follow the same format, is to introduce or review causes of the Civil War while reviewing and applying previously acquired skills and information about the newspaper. The procedure is described as follows: (1) classes review newspaper format and writing; (2) classes are divided into groups of four to six students, each assigned to represent a northern or southern newspaper from 1860; (3) groups choose a city and newspaper name; (4) directions are distributed and reviewed; (5) newspapers are created using the library, in-class research, and group work; and (6) groups write letters to the editor of opposing newspapers or discuss differences in presentation of the same event as possible follow-up activities. This guide includes student directions and an outline of the contents of the newspapers which must contain news coverage, interviews, two feature articles, two editorials, a letter to the editor, and a political cartoon. A 24-item bibliography of suggested resources is appended. (DC)

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NEWS OF THE NATION: A Civil War Newspaper Project

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NEWS OF THE NATION: A group activity to introduce or review causes of the Civil War while reviewing and applying previously acquired skills and information about the newspaper.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To become familiar with events leading to the Civil War
2. To review and apply newspaper analysis skills
3. To develop an appreciation of alternative points of view
4. To develop perspective and express opinion
5. To recognize perspective and bias in news media
6. To practise expository and creative writing
7. To foster group cooperation
8. To apply library research skills

TIME REQUIRED: Newspaper requirements can be adapted to fit class time ranging from three days to one week, depending on whether library research time is provided in class.

PROCEDURE: Review newspaper format with students, emphasizing the five W's, and the differences among news articles, features, and editorials. Divide class into groups of 4-6 students, assigning each group to represent a Southern or Northern newspaper of 1860. Groups may pick their own city and newspaper name. Distribute class handout (directions) and review with students. The remainder of project time will be spent in library and in-class research, and group work. A possible follow-up activity is to have groups exchange newspapers and to write letters to the editor of an opposing newspaper or discuss differences in presentation of the same event.

NEWS OF THE NATION: A newspaper project covering the causes of the Civil War
STUDENT DIRECTIONS

In the 10 years between 1850 and 1860, there were several events and trends that increased the conflict between the North and South so significantly that they can be identified as "causes" of the Civil War, which began in 1861. These situations were: the Compromise of 1850, the Abolitionist Movement, the Kansas-Nebraska Act and Bleeding Kansas, the founding of the Republican Party, the Dred Scott Decision, John Brown's Raid, the states' rights issue, the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and the election of Abraham Lincoln.

DIRECTIONS: In this project, you will take a look at the events listed above and discover how they contributed to the North-South conflict. The class will be divided into four groups, each representing either a Southern or Northern newspaper staff. Groups will be assigned a "side" but then may choose their own city and newspaper name. The year is 1860, and each newspaper is publishing a special retrospective issue on the preceding decade. The focus of the issue is events in the North-South conflict, presented, according to newspaper, from either a Northern or Southern point of view. Each group's newspaper must include all the entries and follow the format listed below. Keep in mind that "point of view" is an important part of this assignment. News stories may be essentially the same from one paper to another, but features and editorials should reflect your paper's position as a voice of the North or the South.

CONTENTS: Each newspaper must include the entries outlined below. Each group may divide assignments among its members as it wishes.

1) NEWS COVERAGE: Articles on each of the following:

a) the Compromise of 1850
b) the Dred Scott Decision
c) the formation of the Republican Party
d) the Kansas-Nebraska Act
e) John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry

2) Interviews with at least 2 of the following:

a)Stephen Douglas
b)Abraham Lincoln
c)Henry Clay

d)John Calhoun
e)Frederick Douglass

As feature articles, interviews should reflect both the writer's and the interviewee's points of view. Research your subject's opinions and contributions to the North-South relationship, for example, his part in the Compromise of 1850 or other important legislation listed above, his stand on the states' rights issue, etc.

3) FEATURE ARTICLE: The Abolitionist Movement
This feature story must include discussion of 3 important people, 2 events, and 2 publications that were part of this movement.

4) FEATURE ARTICLE: War Readiness
Discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of your side should war break out. Consider factors such as economics, population, public opinion, industries, finances, leaders, transportation, resources, etc.

5) EDITORIAL: Lincoln's election
Discuss significant campaign issues. Which issues did you as a Northerner or Southerner agree and disagree with and why? What effect do you foresee Lincoln's election having on the country?

6) EDITORIAL: Slavery
Present your paper's position on the slavery question. Your discussion should include economic, political, and moral considerations. Defend your position!

7) LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Choose 1 of the features or editorials listed above and respond to it. You will have to work in cooperation with the author of the article you choose. As a Northerner or Southerner, how do you feel about the issue in question and specific points raised by the article's author.

8) POLITICAL CARTOON
Show your newspapers position on either: the Dred Scott Decision, Bleeding Kansas, or Lincoln's election.

9) NEWSPAPER FORMAT

There are two possible ways to present your newspaper:

a) on a single piece of large posterboard. Arrange your articles in sections, as if your poster were the front page of a newspaper. Make it look like a newspaper-arrange articles in columns.

b) on standard 8x11 paper, assemble your articles according to front page news, feature stories, editorial page, etc. Remember to arrange your articles in columns like a real newspaper.

Whichever format you choose for assembling your newspaper, you must include:

a masthead (including newspaper name, date, city, volume)

headlines for each article or story

author by-lines for each article and story

The following is an alternative newspaper-related project which may be better suited to junior high school students who may have difficulty understanding the causes of the Civil War through such an independent activity. project follows the same format as the previous project but focuses on events and conditions during the Civil War, which are more straightforward and therefore more easily synthesized by younger students.

NEWS OF THE NATION: A Newspaper Project on the Civil War.

DIRECTIONS: In this project, you will look at significant events of the Civil War. The class will be divided into four groups, each representing either a Southern or Northern newspaper staff reporting on the war. Groups will be assigned a "side" but may then choose their own city and newspaper name. Each group's newspaper must include all the entries and follow the format listed below. Keep in mind that an important part of your project is to accurately represent a newspaper. While news articles should present facts in newspaper style, features and editorials should reflect your paper's position as a voice of the North or the South.

CONTENTS: Each newspaper must include the entries outlined below. Your group may divide assignments as it wishes.

1. NEWS COVERAGE: Articles on each of the following:

   a) Battle of Bull Run
   b) Battle of Vicksburg
   c) Battle of Gettysburg
   d) Gettysburg Address
   e) Sherman's March to the Sea

2. INTERVIEWS.

Northern Newspaper	Southern Newspaper
Lincoln	Jefferson Davis
Grant or Sherman	Robert E. Lee

Research your subjects opinions, political or military background, war strategies and objectives. You may write this feature in article form or question-answer interview form.

3. EDITORIALS.

a) The Emancipation Proclamation: Present your paper's position on this law; how will it affect you side's morale, war effort, etc.?

b) Sherman's March to the Sea: How does your paper feel about the practicality and ethics of these war tactics? Is anything fair in war?

c) Draft and Draft Protests: The Union had a draft, the Confederacy didn't. Is the draft necessary; How will the protests effect the war effort and morale?

4. EDITORIAL CARTOON illustrating the point of view expressed in any of the editorials above.

5. FEATURE ARTICLES. Choose any two.

a) The Effects of the War on Your Country. Describe ways the war has helped or hurt your side (economically, physically, personally). What reconstruction tasks do you foresee for the war's end?

b) The Homefront. Describe noncombatants' contributions to the war effort, that is, what did women, children and old people do to help their side? How did these peoples lives change? What sacrifices did they make?

c) Blacks Contributions to the War Effort.

d) Spies in the War.

6. ADVERTISEMENTS.

Create illustrations and text advertising 3 products that would have been for sale during the war.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

America: A Developing Democracy. Union in Conflict, 1826- 1876.

American Dream: Myth or Reality. Parts 1 and 2.

American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War.

Angle, Paul McClelland, Picture History of the Civil War Years.

Barry, James. Bloody Kansas.

Catton, Bruce. America Goes to War.

Civil War: Soldiers and Civilians. (Social Issues Resources Series.

Cole, Arthur. The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850- 1865.

Commager, Henry Steele. Blue and Gray: The Story of the Civil War as Told by Its Participants.

Crozier, Emmet. Yankee Reporters, 1861- 1865.

Cummins, Duane, and White, William. Inquiries into American History: Origins of the Civil War.

Currier and Ives Picture History of the Civil War.

Dowdey, Clifford. Land They Fought For: The South as the Confederacy.

English, Raymond. Expansion, Conflict, and Reconstruction, 1825- 1888.
Katz, William. Minorities in American History

Katz, William. Minorities in American History. Slavery to the Civil War: 1812- 1865.

Long, Everett. The Civil War Day by Day.

McPherson, James. Marching Toward Freedom: The Negro in the Civil War.

Personal Conflicts in a Divided Nation. (Universal Values in American History Series.)

Pratt, David. The Civil War in Pictures.

Russell, William. My Diary North and South .

Smith, George W. Life in the North During the Civil War.

Starr, L.M. Bohemian Brigade: Civil War Newsmen in Action.

The Union Divides: A Simulation Game.

Union or Secession. The Compromise of 1850.(Values and Decision Series.)